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Diana T Fritz 03/15/2007 02:56:28 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 12, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1114 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: SENV, ETRD, ECON, EPET, KSCA
Captions: None
Subject: UAE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01114

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: ECON
INFO: P/M AMB DCM POL
Laser1:
INFO: FCS

DISSEMINATION: ECON
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM: RALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: ECON: OJOHN
CLEARED: CGD:MCARVER

VZCZCADI814
RR RUEHC RUEHZM
DE RUEHAD #1114/01 1031535
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 121535Z APR 04
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3933
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001114

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, OES
DEPT PASS TO USTR - JASON BUNTIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KSCA](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE Environmental Efforts

Ref: State 60561

1. The UAE, led by the emirate of Abu Dhabi, has taken a number of steps to protect the environment and to increase environmental awareness in the UAE. The Federal Environmental Agency (FEA), established in 1993, is the federal agency charged with drafting UAE environmental laws and regulations. It is also the point of contact for international conventions such as CITES and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The UAE passed and implemented a comprehensive federal environmental law in 1999 (Federal Law 24 of 1999). The law stipulates that all projects implemented in the UAE require environmental impact assessments to ensure that the project does not adversely affect the environment. The law also stipulates penalties,

including fines and imprisonment, for polluting the environment: for example, the penalty for discharging oil into the marine environment is imprisonment and a fine of not less than 150,000 dirhams (\$40,000) and not more than one million dirhams (\$270,000). In keeping with the federal nature of the UAE, enforcement of environmental laws is the responsibility of the individual emirates, although the FEA has the authority to monitor implementation. In all of the emirates except Abu Dhabi, enforcement is the responsibility of the municipal authorities. Abu Dhabi established the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA) in 1996. On 27 November 2000, the Agency was designated by Abu Dhabi Emirate's Executive Council, as the "Competent Authority" for environment and wildlife issues in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and it serves as Abu Dhabi's official agency responsible for implementing environmental laws. ERWDA is also a scientific and educational institution that serves, for example, as the UAE's scientific authority for the CITES convention.

12. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi, through ERWDA, has taken the lead in the UAE in trying to increase environmental awareness, especially in the protection of the marine environment. One of the steps that ERWDA has taken is to try and establish environmental baselines and databases. ERWDA, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, conducted a survey of the marine environment and determined that the waters around Abu Dhabi were over fished. In response, the UAE passed a federal law regulating fishing. The UAE has also created wildlife protected areas and engaged in captive breeding programs to rebuild stocks of endangered animals, including the Houbara Bustard, a favorite game bird for falconers. In 2002, ERWDA launched the The Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative during the "World Summit for Sustainable Development" in Johannesburg in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The goal of this initiative is to bridge the environmental data gap between and within developing and developed countries and provide direct and cost-effective access to environmental data. This initiative aims also at upgrading ways of monitoring environmental problems. ERDWA is working with the USG on this initiative.

13. As an oil exporting country, with a "car culture," the UAE faces the challenges of air and water pollution. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has established Health, Safety, and Environment policies and objectives. These include the elimination of hydrocarbon flaring and other policies designed to minimize the impact of the oil industry on the environment. Based on a 1998 GCC resolution, the UAE phased out leaded gasoline and replaced it with unleaded gasoline as of January 1, 2003.

14. Excessive water and electricity usage are among the UAE's most pressing problems. The average per capita consumption of water in the UAE is approximately 133 gallons per day. Much of the water produced in the UAE is desalinated seawater. Nearly all of the wastewater in the emirate of Abu Dhabi is treated and used to turn large areas of desert into green areas. Almost half of the wastewater in the northern emirates is treated and used for irrigation. Despite the high level dependence on seawater and water treatment, however, the UAE is estimated to be depleting its aquifers.

15. The UAE's high water usage is partially due to population pressure and to poor pricing policies. It is also due to the UAE's active efforts to combat desertification and to reclaim or create useable agricultural land. More than 70 per cent of the country's water is used for irrigation. In the 24 years from 1977 to 2001, the amount of land under cultivation in the UAE increased by 1,604%. The number of palm trees in the UAE increased, during the same period, from 1.7 million to over 40 million. The UAE acceded to the UN Convention for Combating Desertification in 1997.

16. The UAE has also taken steps to meet its CITES

obligations. In 2002, the UAE instituted a national falcon registration system and passed Federal Law 27 of 2002 which was issued to enforce the CITES Convention and help to identify strict legal procedures to control illegal trade in wildlife trade and penalize violators. Under the law possession, sale or display of any species listed in the CITES appendices without the appropriate registration is punishable by imprisonment for a term not to exceed three months and/or a fine of not less than 5,000 dirhams (\$1350) and not more than 30,000 dirhams (\$8100). In March 2003, the FEA raided pet shops in the Abu Dhabi port area and confiscated a number of endangered animals.

17. More information on the UAE Environmental system can be found at the Federal Environmental Agency's web site www.fea.gov.ae and at the web site for ERWDA http://www.erwda.gov.ae/index_eng.html.

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